

can build the bridges of learning for our students to cross over this bridge to the 21st Century like we are building infrastructures, roads, and bridges in our towns and in our cities.

Yes, the President's initiative is one that we embrace, members and commissioners on the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, a think tank that speaks to education, because we want to make sure that our children do have the quality of qualified teachers, reduce class sizes where there will be more individualized training, after-school programs where they can further this training and also enhance their knowledge, and, yes, school construction.

Children must have an environment that is conducive to learning. Our children deserve no less, and our Nation has no recourse if we are to prepare our future leaders for this global workplace.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HILL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MINGE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHAYS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PASCRELL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. FURSE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FURSE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ISSUES YET TO BE SOLVED IN THE DO-NOTHING CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend the hour this evening with some of my Democratic colleagues basically reiterating what we have been saying the last few days or the last few weeks; and that is that, because of the Republican leadership's inattention, if you will, to the budget and to the needs of the American people, and because of their unwillingness to reach out and deal with some of the most pressing issues that the public is really crying out for this Congress to address, we are now faced here with another day and another continuing resolution because there is no budget because the Republican leadership has not passed a budget and is basically trying to get out of town, have this Congress adjourn, without addressing some of the major concerns that we as Democrats feel should have been addressed and still could be addressed if the Republican leadership would only take them up. I just mention a few like HMO reform, education initiatives, the need to address concerns about Social Security.

I just wanted to point out that, due to excessive partisanship, we have seen the Republican leadership waste time on a very extremist agenda in this Congress and not deal with the issues that really should be dealt with.

I just wanted to mention two tonight before I introduce and yield time to some of my colleagues. One is this raid on the Social Security Trust Fund to pay for tax breaks, if you will, primarily for the wealthy, and the second is school vouchers.

What we saw just a few weeks ago was really the most alarming of the extremist proposals passed by the Republican Congress, and that was H.R. 4579, the GOP tax break bill. This raided the Social Security Trust Fund to pay for an \$80 billion election year tax break. The House Republicans passed their tax, their tax cut bill on September 26 by a vote of 229 to 195, and they said they were using the surplus for tax cuts.

But what the Republicans failed to point out was that, without the Social Security Trust Fund, there was no surplus. Indeed, 98 percent of the surplus from fiscal year 1999 through fiscal year 2008 comes from the surplus in the Social Security Trust Fund.

That is virtually all the surplus reflects, anticipated buildup in the Social Security Trust Fund to pay future Social Security benefits. To spend this Social Security surplus on tax cuts is to endanger the future benefits of Social Security recipients, our senior citizens and future senior citizens.

Democrats have proposed saving Social Security first, preserving every

penny of the surplus until the Social Security Trust Fund is strengthened through the 21st Century.

But the Republicans did not want to deal with that. They did not want to deal with Social Security. They did not care about Social Security. They just wanted to get some quick tax breaks, again primarily for the wealthy.

The second thing I wanted to mention tonight, and I know that most of my colleagues are going to talk about, the Democrats education initiative, the school modernization program, the proposal to add 100,000 teachers to bring class size down.

These are really the two issues that we insist must be addressed before this Congress adjourns. But what I wanted to point out very briefly is that, not only did the Republican leadership not address these important education initiatives, but they spent a tremendous amount of time this last year trying to take away money from public schools and give it to private schools in the form of vouchers.

I consider this one of the most extreme parts of the GOP agenda, this anti-public education agenda they have been pursuing over the last 2 years. Even the conservative Washington Times acknowledges, and I just want to quote, "that the ground breaking school voucher provision is the first step in a larger Republican effort to shift Federal aid away from public schools while making it easier for parents to send their children to private schools. School vouchers use scarce taxpayer dollars to subsidize attendance of private and religious schools rather than improving the public schools."

I am going to use a quote from one of my colleagues, a Republican, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA) because some of the Republicans on the other side share the Democratic view on this, although the leadership was clearly against us.

The gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA) said, and I quote, "ultimately these school vouchers will result in gutting the public school system. Because vouchers will be sending more and more of our scarce financial resources out of the public system and into the private system."

Mr. Speaker, this is just the beginning of what the far right wants to do to destroy public education. They wanted to eliminate the Department of Education, and they want to take money from the public schools and give it to the private schools.

Just an example of a couple of expressions that have been made by some of the far right proponents, if you will, who are advocates of this. This is a quote from Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian coalition. He says, "the public education movement has always been an antiChristian movement." Can you imagine suggesting that somehow public schools are antiChristian?

Another quote from Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority, and I